

A Grinnellian Pioneers in another
Field of Service.

Miriam J. Spaulding.

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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**

GRINNELL AND YOU

February, 1936

Vol. 15, No. 5

A GRINNELLIAN PIONEERS IN ANOTHER FIELD OF SERVICE

By Miriam J. Spaulding, '32

"No one knows, unless he has tried it, what it means to sit all day
With folded hands, with the world shut out and me shut in."

—Caroline Duprey, Colfax, Iowa.

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GRADUATED in 1907 from Grinnell, Ethel Towne Holmes of Des Moines is one of the many Grinnell "Pioneers" who has literally earned the name of which all loyal Grinnellians are so proud. As Executive Secretary of the Commission for the Blind of Iowa, Mrs. Holmes began the work of Iowa's project to assist the adult blind in 1926, following the passage of the act of the Iowa legislature creating the Commission for the Blind.

Before this, the only help given blind people in Iowa was in the State School for the Blind at Vinton where children who are not able to gain an education in the public schools because of defective vision are educated. While the education of blind children has been carried on in this country for over one hundred years, state organizations for the adult blind are of much more recent origin, covering a period of only about thirty-five years. F. E. Palmer, Grinnell 1888, superintendent of the school at Vinton, was largely responsible for the introduction of the bill which created the Commission for the Blind, as he saw the need for further help to the graduates of Vinton as they went out to make places for themselves, as well as assistance for those who lost their sight after school age, who applied to him for aid.

Contrary to the general belief, there are no state homes for the blind in Iowa. There is a small private home in Des Moines for women, housing twelve at the present time, and blind men and women are to be found in church homes and fraternal homes. Consequently, the first task was to find who and

where the subjects of the new service were to be found. Through the men's service clubs, women's clubs, county lists for the blind

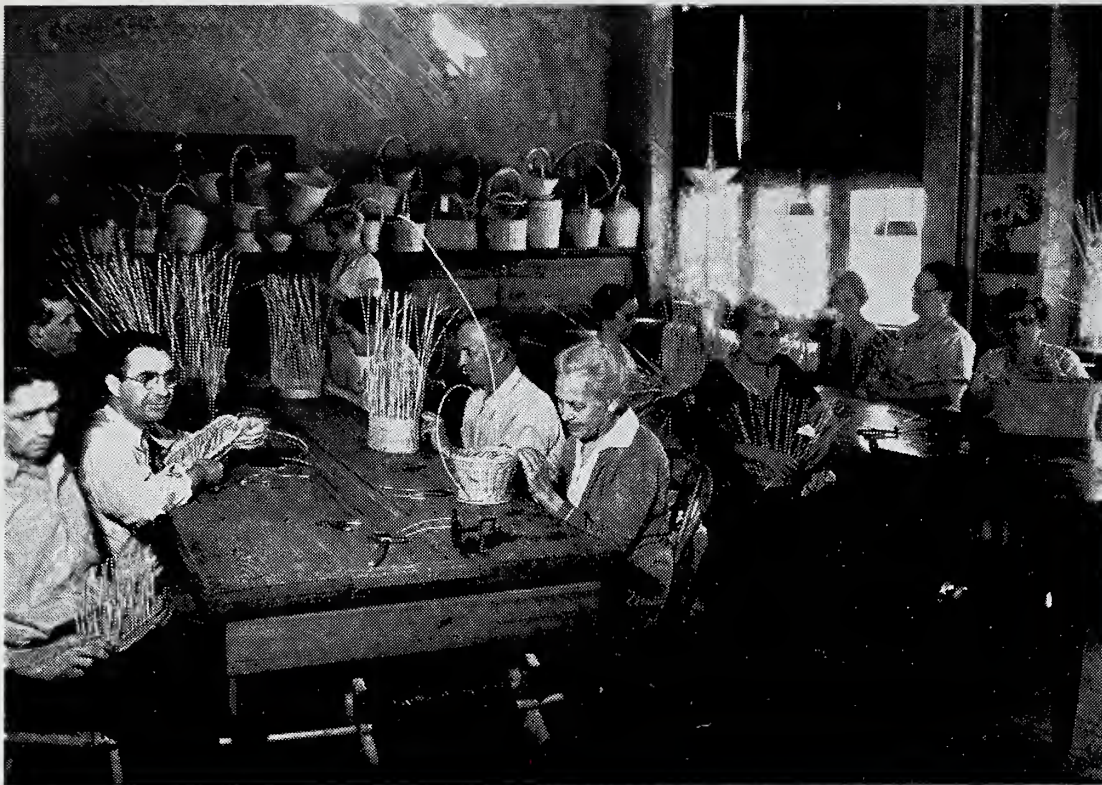
pensions, county nurses and others, the names of about 1,800 blind and partially blind people were located. Questionnaires were then sent to the blind, asking, among other things, what the commission could do to serve them. The answers to this question formed the working basis for the new work, ranging as they did all the way from the man who wanted the names of all the blind women between 40 and 55, "because he was tired of doing his own cooking," to the woman who wanted to learn Braille, "so that she could read

to herself when the family were busy, though they were so good to her."

Iowa's problem is essentially a rural one, since there are no large cities where the blind are located in considerable numbers. Rather, they are scattered through the ninety-nine counties on farms, or in small villages, sometimes as much as an entire county separating those needing service. In the congested districts of the Eastern states the problems are entirely different, for there the people can easily be reached by a corps of Home Teachers who, because of the short distances, can make several visits a week to give instruction in handicrafts, typing, Braille reading and writing, and chair seating of all kinds. In isolated districts where a teacher is able to make a visit but once in two weeks or more the pupil's interest lags and little real benefit is derived. Mrs. Holmes has employed local teachers, always blind people when



ETHEL TOWNE HOLMES



A class in basket weaving at the adult summer school held in the buildings of the State School for the Blind at Vinton last summer.

available, in the larger cities, who are paid by the lesson to go into the homes to give instruction.

Following the example of Wisconsin and Minnesota, in its second year the Commission organized an adult summer school held in the buildings at Vinton, kindly loaned by the State Board of Education, and financed entirely by the Commission. This session is now open to any blind or partially blind person over 21. At first there was an age limit of sixty, but when one woman wrote that she wanted to come because, though seventy, she "was just as smart as any woman of sixty, if the Secretary would just investigate her," (and she was), there is no age restriction. Summer Schools like this are a unique contribution of the Middle West to adult education.

The change of environment, the variety of interests introduced by the pupils themselves, the exchange of viewpoints outside the classroom, the confidence developed in helping themselves as they learn what some other person does, are as important as the actual subjects they are taught. No home teacher, however capable and helpful, can possibly contribute to the individual as much as the Summer School does. Frequently a student has come from a home where, in an effort to be kind, the family has discouraged him from attempting to do anything for fear he might injure himself. Sometimes the families have not known how to help, and it is

all too easy for the blind person to drop into an aimless life of not trying to do anything. There is no part of the work which shows such quick returns as does this school, for a blind person goes there, utterly discouraged, and in six weeks becomes a different individual.

One man, aged 43, said at the end of the school that he might never use some of the material things he had learned such as weaving, but he would use all the things of the spirit—courage, determination, patience, and understanding—which would enable him to undertake projects which before losing his sight he would not have dared to attempt. Some years afterward, his wife told Mrs. Holmes that that six weeks had completely changed their family life and she could never be grateful enough.

Sometimes it means much persuasion on the part of Mrs. Holmes to get the blind person to consent to go to the school, for he dreads to accustom himself to a new en-

GRINNELL AND YOU

Published for the Grinnell Alumni
Association by Grinnell College.
Issued Nine Times A Year

Entered as Second-Class Matter at Postoffice at Grinnell Ia., November 28, 1927, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

H. W. Matlack '02, Editor

Subscription price, \$1.00 a year, payable in advance. Single copies fifteen cents each. Make checks payable to Grinnell and You.

vironment; perhaps fifty or sixty years have passed since he left school and he is fearful that he cannot learn. Such a student was a Croatian who had lost his sight in a mine accident. He learned all the industrial subjects more quickly than anyone else and even progressed so far in broom-making in one session that the Commission loaned him broom machinery and material to start a little broom shop in his back yard.

One man who took three years of urging wrote the following on his return home, "Two years ago I was just a blind man sitting in the corner doing nothing, I didn't know there was a thing in the world that I could do. Now thanks to the Commission, I am able to read and write Braille, use the typewriter, make door mats, make baskets and cane chairs, and I have a good start on piano work. Now instead of sitting in the corner I am kept busy trying to fill my orders."

Though it is unusual, sometimes people who think they are facing inevitable blindness come to the Summer School "to prepare" themselves. One man with a tumor on the brain had been told by doctors that he would die in two years and consequently thought it was not worth while to try to learn anything. Finding he was no worse after the two years had passed, he decided to attend the school and became one of its most ambitious pupils. Now, five years after the death sentence he is happy applying the things he learned. Perhaps some day after

Grinnell has all she needs, some benevolent person will endow a summer camp for Iowa's blind where they can all have two weeks vacation.

One of the provisions of the law is that the Commission shall help the blind in marketing their goods, which really means that it shall teach them to make saleable articles. One of the most important industries for the women has been that of hemming towels. The State Federation of Women's Clubs has taken as one of its three major projects the selling of the towels through its committee on the Education of the Deaf and Blind. This year 20,000 have been sold, giving employment to sixty women. The workers say that next to the radio this work has given them more pleasure than anything that has come into their lives. The men have been given employment making brushes, doormats, brooms, and woven rugs which have been sold in a house-to-house canvassing business. Over \$9,000 worth of merchandise has been sold this last year with almost \$5,000 paid in wages to blind workers.

The problem is not teaching the blind various occupations and trades, but educating seeing people to a realization of what blind people can do, so that an opportunity may be given them to make use of their ability. Since the fortieth General Assembly made an appropriation to aid blind students who are regularly enrolled in any course of study,

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Instruction in such trades as weaving and chair seating are a part of the program at the adult summer school. Many of the students become expert in these occupations within a few weeks.



PIONEER BASKETBALL TEAM, BESET BY BAD LUCK, DROPS FROM SECOND PLACE IN MISSOURI VALLEY

Truesdale Expects Better Showing With Return To Lineup Of Julie Bauer

WITH CO-CAPTAIN Julie Bauer out of the game during the entire month of January Grinnell's basketball team which started the season with such high promise folded up during the month and dropped from second place in the Missouri Valley rating to the cellar position. The Pioneers surprised their supporters by winning two out of their first three games on their annual southern trip. Washburn was defeated by a one point margin and the Oklahoma Aggies lost a 31-21 decision to the Grinnellians. The road trip ended with a loss to the Tulsa team.

Returning home the Pioneers lost a closely contested game to the Washington University five to have a 500 percent rating with two wins and two losses. Just before the team left on the week end trip to play Drake and Creighton, Julie Bauer was confined to the hospital with an attack of appendicitis. Grinnell lost both games to their old rivals by large scores.

With Bauer still out the Pioneers won from Coe on the home floor 28-27, on Saturday night, Feb. 1. On the next Monday, Feb. 3, the Pioneers lost a heart breaker to Washburn in two overtime periods 42-41. This game was one of the best played on the local floor in the last four years. The two teams were so evenly balanced that they matched point for point and were tied 34-34 at the end of the regular playing time. At the end of the first overtime period the score was still tied 38-38. In the last extra period Grinnell scored a basket to go ahead, but dropped behind as Washburn scored two field goals. Jim La Masney made up one point of the deficit by sinking a free throw. With score 42-41 the two teams played some of the roughest, fastest, basketball ever seen.

The Washburn game was so fast throughout that many fouls were called and several times the game threatened to get out of the officials' hands. One Washburn man lost his head in a heated argument over possession of the ball and punched Hal Dean, Grinnell

guard, knocking him off his feet. The player was immediately expelled from the game. He apologized to Dean and they shook hands before the game continued.

With Bauer back in the game Coach Truesdale expects his cagers to better their present standing in the Missouri Valley. The Pioneers already have their eyes trained on the last game of the season, to be played at Grinnell on March 6, with their oldest rivals, Drake University.

Track prospects look none too good this year with only six lettermen returning from last year's squad. Coach Duke has a group of about thirty-five men working out daily on the indoor track. Prospects for the indoor season are particularly bleak, with only Bentley, Barnes, Knapheide and Langlas available from the lettermen. Bradley, Missouri Valley discus champion, and Johnny McMurray, hurdler, are busy with basketball, and Bob Bair, the best sprinter in school, is busy with his studies and will not report until the outdoor season begins.

SIDELINE SLANTS

By Scotty McLeod

Bad luck still stalks the trail of the Pioneers . . . Julie Bauer, co-captain, center, and mainstay of the cage team was confined to the hospital during the road trip in which the Grinnellians were defeated by both Drake and Creighton Bauer had an attack of appendicitis He was kept on the bench during the Coe and Washburn contests to allow him to rest up Whatever chance the Truesdale team might have had in the Missouri Valley went glimmering with Bauer's absence

More bad luck follows the swimming team Sam Holch, Glen Ellyn, co-captain and sprinter, has developed a peculiar infection on his hands

1935

Margaret Bickham is receptionist and office assistant for Dr. Bryan L. Mitchell of Wilmette, Illinois. She is living at home in Wilmette at 429 Ninth Street.

Lorraine Loewe has a secretarial position in the Harris Trust and Savings Bank in Chicago. After office hours she is going on with piano study.

Foster Lee is attending the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and is enthusiastic about his work under such nationally known social workers as Miss Grace Abbott and Miss Sophonisba Breckenridge. He is living at International House, 1414 East 59th Street.

Bernard Huber is principal of the high school at Dawson, Iowa, where he is teaching and directing the band and orchestra as well.

Sol Jacobson is credit manager of the Goodman Motor Company, Authorized Ford Dealers, in Des Moines.

Tom Gordon is with the American Steel Foundries Co., Chicago, Illinois.

Dick Mason is employed in the merchandising department of the Portland Seed Company in Portland, Oregon. He is living in Portland at 2824 N. E. Hancock Street.

Rosamond Fawcett is engaged in research in plant pathology at the University of California Citrus Experiment Station at Riverside, California. She writes that she has practically completed a key to the flora of western Riverside county which she hopes to have published.

Roger V. Hansen has a position in the Central National Bank in Des Moines.

Frank McWethy is employed in the purchasing department of the Western-Austin Company, manufacturers of road making machinery and equipment in Aurora, Illinois.

A GRINNELLIAN PIONEERS IN ANOTHER FIELD OF SERVICE

(continued from page 3)

profession, art or science in any university, college, conservatory of music, normal, professional or vocational school approved by the Iowa State Board of Education, this opportunity has been continued. With more prejudice to overcome than the young graduate who sees, some of the young blind people who have made splendid college records are

finding it difficult to secure teaching positions. There are several successful blind osteopaths in the state, one of them the inventor of a table for use in giving treatments.

For centuries in Japan the work of massage has been given exclusively to the blind. This field is gradually broadening in this country. While piano tuning has always been one of the best occupations for blind men, the depression has worked a severe hardship on the tuners and no other occupation has been found to take its place. Successful blind people are to be found in practically all fields of business. One young man with unusual musical ability was selected from many seeing applicants for the position of demonstrating the new pipeless organ.

All workers for the blind feel the great need for new occupations for them. The American Foundation for the Blind, with which another Grinnellian, Eber Palmer, '18, is now connected, is devoting much time to this problem. There are many occupations which an individual might find for himself that would not be feasible for others. For instance, one of the Summer School men is raising pedigreed dogs. While he is very successful, not another person in thousands might have this particular ability. Within the last year, through an order of the U. S. Treasury Department, several men have been permitted to have magazine stands in the post offices of our larger cities.

While the Commission is not permitted to give material aid, its functions being industrial and educational, it is delegated "to ameliorate" the condition of the blind, and under this heading, all sorts of services are given, from providing radios in extreme cases of need to driving the Commissioner's car over the border into Missouri to bring the parents of a dying man to his bedside. The Library Commission has an excellent library, and the Commission for the Blind lends specially made games of checkers and dominoes and Braille marked cards. The new Talking Book is bringing delight to those who cannot learn to read with their fingers.

After all, as Helen Keller says, "There is no lovelier way to thank God for our sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in the dark," and it is that which Ethel Towne Holmes is endeavoring to do through the Iowa Commission for the Blind.

CLASS NOTES

1891

Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Bixby '91, (Laura Rew '89) formerly of Nashville, Tennessee, are now in Los Angeles, California, where Mr. Bixby is with the N. F. Langton Real Estate Company. Their new address is 5114½ Almaden Drive.

1895

Dr. and Mrs. F. B. Hollenbeck of Lincoln, Nebraska, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Aborn, '18, of Short Hills, New Jersey, with their children, Faith and Robert, spent Christmas with Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Hollenbeck, ex'24 at their home in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania.

1896

Dr. and Mrs. C. E. Harris have moved from Woodman, Colorado, to 1809 N. Franklin Street, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

1907

The home of Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Stewart (Ruth Read) at Yankton, South Dakota, with practically all its contents, was destroyed by fire on Christmas morning. The family escaped without injury.

1908

From Oak Park, Illinois, Mrs. Fred S. Hill (Emma Rasmuson ex '08) writes that "It is always an inspiration and pleasure to read the news from the dear old college." Mrs. Hill's address is 139 North Scoville Avenue.

1913

Miss Beatrice Yager has moved to 516 South Spring Street, Sioux Falls, S. D.

1918

Lectures to 917 patients in the Olive View Sanatorium at San Fernando, California, are broadcast every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday morning by Mrs. Muriel Elliot Gregg over the hospital radio station.

1923

Miss Eleanor Mears (ex '23), home economist with the Jersey Central Power and Light Company of Asbury Park, New Jersey, has moved from Flemington, New Jersey, to 92 Main Street, Keyport, New Jersey.

1925

Miss Onalee Heldridge, formerly professor of history at Monticello Seminary and Junior College at Godfrey, Illinois, is now Dean of Women and head of the history department

of Lincoln College at Lincoln, Illinois.

1926

The district supervisor of Intake Certification, Works Progress Administration at Woodward, Oklahoma, is Dorothy DeVilkinson, '26.

1927

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Moore (Anne Armstrong) are now in Bloomington, Illinois where Mr. Moore is managing editor of Bloomington Daily Pantograph. He was formerly managing editor of the San Diego Sun, San Diego, California.

1929

From Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, Mr. Richard J. Bennett (Mildred Foster) writes that they have had eighty inches of snow so far this season. She says, "At present we are enjoying (??) subzero weather."

On January 1, 1936, Dwight Brooke '29) opened his law office at 503 Iowa-Moines National Bank Building, Des Moines, Iowa. Mrs. Brooke will be remembered as Margaret Lemley, '28.

1930

Miss Lois Klatt (ex'30) of Radcliffe has accepted a secretarial position in Iowa Falls.

Mr. and Mrs. John A. Shields (Lillie Hansen '33), formerly of 252 West 10th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio, have moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where their new address is 242 1st Street, N. E.

1931

George McCandless is now with the Bank of Georgia County National Bank at L'Anse, Michigan.

1932

A former president of Gates Hall, Frank Spangler, is now living at 2208 N. E. 28th Avenue, Portland, Oregon.

1933

Aksel Nielson, former physical instructor at the Boys Club of New York in New York City, is now an instructor at the state school for the blind in Faribault, Minnesota.

1934

John W. Pooley is now in the New York office of the American Sugar Refining Company. His residence address is 124 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, New York.

Anne Varena Mitchell, former president of the International Relations Club and of the Mississippi Valley Conference, is now Mrs. Frederick William Wade of 1902 South Spring Street, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

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